

Appl. No. 09/923,624
Reply to Office Action of June 7, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): An information processing apparatus for exchanging information with other information processing apparatuses over a network, said apparatus comprising:

first record control means for controlling the recording of information relating to at least one community composed of a plurality of users;

second record control means for controlling the recording of information relating to said plurality of users;

first generation means for generating a first set of information corresponding to a virtual space capable of being utilized by said plurality of users using said other information processing apparatuses;

second generation means for generating a second set of information including an information list showing said community a first user participates in from information relating to said plurality of users;

a display which displays at least a portion of the virtual space and said information list;

first output control means for controlling the output to said other information processing apparatuses, of said first set of information generated by said first generation means, and said second set of information generated by said second generation means, and

an input control means for controlling the input from said other information processing apparatuses, of a fourth set of information showing the operation by said first user for giving a third set of information showing a specified community to a second user, from among the second set of information generated by said second generation means, within said virtual space generated by said first generation means;

wherein the third set of information is represented by an icon, where the first user can deliver the third set of information to said second user by dragging and dropping the icon onto a representation of said second user, within the virtual space.

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wherein said first record control means controls the recording of information relating to said community shown by said third set of information, on the basis of said fourth set of information with inputs controlled by said input control means, and

wherein said second record control means controls the recording of information relating to said first user and said second user, on the basis of said fourth set of information with inputs controlled by said input control means.

Claim 2 (original): The information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein in the virtual space, when said first user has given said third set of information to said second user, both said first user and said second user can become members of the community shown in the third set of information.

Claim 3 (original): The information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein when said first user is a controller of said community shown with said third set of information, said first user can make said second user a member of the community by giving said second user said third set of information within the virtual space.

Claim 4 (original) The information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein when said first user has given said third set of information to said second user in the virtual space,

said first user loses said third set of information, and is no longer a community member shown in said third set of information, and

said second user receives said third set of information and becomes a community member shown in said third set of information.

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Claim 5 (previously presented): The information processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising third generation means to generate for each user, a fifth set of information available to an individual user and corresponding to a virtual space for exclusive use by the individual user;

second output control means for controlling output of said fifth set of information generated by said third generation means, to said other information processing apparatuses;

wherein said second set of information is contained in said fifth set of information generated by said third generation means.

Claim 6 (original): The information processing apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said second set of information is image information corresponding to said community, and can be displayed on other information processing apparatuses within said exclusive user virtual space output by the second output control means.

Claim 7 (original) The information processing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the size of said image information changes according to the number of members participating in the corresponding community.

Claim 8 (previously presented): The information processing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein when said individual user is the owner of specified said community, said image information corresponding to specified said community is displayed separately for distinguishing said image information from said image information corresponding to other said communities.

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Claim 9 (currently amended): An information processing method for an information processing apparatus for exchanging information with other information processing apparatuses over a network, said method comprising:

recording information relating to at least one community composed of a plurality of users;

recording information relating to said plurality of users of said community;

generating a first set of information corresponding to a virtual space utilizable by a plurality of said users using other said information processing apparatuses;

generating a second set of information including a table showing said community participated in by a first user of said plurality of users;

displaying at least a portion of the virtual space and said table on a display;

controlling an output to said other information processing apparatuses, of said first set of information and said second set of information

controlling the input from said other information processing apparatuses, of a fourth set of information showing the operation by said first user for giving a third set of information showing a specified community to a second user, from among said second set of information generated by said second generation means, within said virtual space, controlling the recording of information relating to said community shown by said third set of information, on the basis of said fourth set of information with inputs controlled by said input control means,

wherein the third set of information is represented by an icon, where the first user can deliver the third set of information to said second user by dragging and dropping the icon onto a representation associated with said second user within the virtual space, and,

controlling the recording of information relating to said first user and said second user, on the basis of said fourth set of information with inputs controlled by the processing in said input control step.

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Claim 10 (currently amended): An information processing computer program for exchanging information with other information processing apparatuses over a network, said computer program comprising:

a first recording control step for controlling the recording of information relating to at least one community composed of a plurality of users;

a second recording control step for controlling the recording of information relating to said plurality of users in said community;

a first generation step for generating a first set of information corresponding to a virtual space utilizable by a plurality of said users using other said information processing apparatuses;

a second generation step for generating a second set of information including information on a table showing said community participated in by said first user, from information relating to said plurality of said users;

displaying at least a portion of the virtual space and said table on a display;

an output control step for controlling an output to said other information processing apparatuses, of said first set of information generated by processing in said first generation step, and said second set of information generated by processing in said second generation step; and

an input control step for controlling an input from said other information processing apparatuses, of a fourth set of information showing the operation by a said first user for giving a third set of information showing a specified community to a second user, from among said second set of information generated by said second generation means, within said virtual space generated by the processing in said first generation step; wherein said first recording control step controls the recording of information relating to said community shown by said third set of information, on the basis of said fourth set of information with inputs controlled by said input control means,

wherein the third set of information is represented by an icon, where the first user can deliver the third set of information to said second user by dragging and dropping the icon onto said second user within the virtual space, and

wherein said second recording control step controls the recording of information relating to said first user and said second user, on the basis of said fourth set of information with inputs controlled by the processing in said input control step.

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Claim 11 (currently amended): A service providing system which comprises a first information processing apparatus for exchanging information with other information processing apparatuses over a network, and a second information processing apparatus possessed by a user, said first information processing apparatus comprising:

first record control means for controlling the recording of information relating to a community composed of a plurality of users;

second record control means for controlling the recording of information relating to said plurality of users in said community;

first generation means for generating a first set of information corresponding to a virtual space capable of being utilized by said plurality of users using said other information processing apparatuses;

second generation means for generating a second set of information including a list showing said community a first user participates in, from information relating to said plurality of users;

first output control means for controlling output to said second set of information processing apparatus, of said first set of information generated from said first generation means, and said second set of information generated by said second generation means;

first input control means for controlling an input from said second set of information processing apparatus, of a fourth set of information showing the operation by said first user for giving a third set of information showing a specified community to a second user, from among a second set of information generated by said second generation means, within said virtual space generated by said first generation means;

wherein the third set of information is represented by an icon, where the first user can deliver the third set of information to said second user by dragging and dropping the icon onto said second user within the virtual space.

wherein said first record control means controls the recording of information relating to said community shown by said third set of information, on the basis of said fourth set of information with inputs controlled by said first input control means, and

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said second record control means controls the recording of information relating to said first user and said second user, on the basis of said fourth set of information with inputs controlled by said first input control means, and

said second information processing apparatus comprising:

second input control means for controlling the input of said first set of information and said second set of information with outputs controlled by said first output control means;

display control means for controlling the display of at least a portion of the virtual space, said first set of information and said second set of information with outputs controlled by said second input control means;

third input control means for controlling the input of said fourth set of information showing the operation for supplying to said second user said third set of information showing a specified community from among said second set of information within said virtual space showing said first set of information, and said third set of information was supplied by said first user after referring to said first set of information and said second set of information whose display is controlled by said display control means; and

second output control means for controlling the output to said first set of information processing apparatus, of said fourth set of information with inputs controlled by said third input control means.

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Claim 12 (currently amended): An information processing apparatus for exchanging information with other information processing apparatuses over a network, said apparatus comprising:

a first recorder that records information relating to at least one community composed of a plurality of users;

a second recorder that records information for each of said plurality of users;

a first information generator that generates a first set of information corresponding to a virtual space, wherein the virtual space is capable of being utilized by said plurality of users using said other information processing apparatuses;

a second information generator that generates a second set of information, including an information list showing said community a first user participates in based on said information relating to each of said plurality of users, wherein each of said communities on said information list are represented by an image;

a display screen that displays at least a portion of said virtual world and said information list;

an output controller for controlling the output of said first set of information, and said second set of information to the other information processing apparatuses; and

an input controller for controlling the communication of a third set of information regarding a specific community on said information list from said first user to a second user within said virtual space;

wherein the third set of information is represented by an icon, where the first user can deliver the third set of information to said second user by dragging and dropping the icon onto said second user within the virtual space.

wherein said first recorder controls the recording of said third set of information; and said second recorder controls the recording of information relating to said first user and said second user;

and wherein said first user uses said input controller to move the image of said specific community from said information list to said second user within said virtual space on said display screen.

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Claim 13 (previously presented): The information processing apparatus of claim 12, wherein when the first user communicates the third set of information to the second user, both said first user and said second user are eligible to become members of the community in the third set of information.

Claim 14 (previously presented): The information processing apparatus of claim 12, wherein when the first user owns the specific community of said third set of information, said first user can make said second user a member of the specific community by communicating said third set of information within the virtual space to the second user.

Claim 15 (previously presented): The information processing apparatus of Claim 14, wherein the communication of the third set of information from the first user to the second user includes clicking on and dragging the third set of information displayed by the display screen to a representation of the second user in the virtual space.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The information processing apparatus of Claim 15, wherein the representation of the second user includes an avatar.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The information processing apparatus according to claim 12, wherein when the first user has communicated the third set of information to the second user in the virtual space,

said first user loses said third set of information, and is no longer a member of the community defined by said third set of information, and

said second user receives said third set of information and becomes a member of the community member defined by said third set of information.

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Claim 18 (previously presented): The information processing apparatus according to claim 12, further comprising:

a third information generator which generates for each user, a fifth set of information available to at least one individual user of the plurality of users and corresponding to an exclusive virtual space for exclusive use by the individual user; and

a second output controller for controlling output of said fifth set of information to said other information processing apparatuses,

wherein said second set of information is contained in said fifth set of information.

Claim 19 (previously presented): The information processing apparatus according to claim 18, wherein said second set of information includes image information regarding said community, and is displayable on other information processing apparatuses within the exclusive virtual space output by the second output controller.

Claim 20 (previously presented) The information processing apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the size of said image information changes according to the number of members participating in the corresponding community.

Claim 21 (previously presented): The information processing apparatus according to claim 19, wherein when said individual user is the owner of specified said community, said image information corresponding to specified said community is displayed separately for distinguishing said image information of said community from image information corresponding to other communities.

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